

The background of the cover is a photograph showing an aerial view of a city, likely Thanjavur, with a river and a large wall. The text is overlaid on this image.

HINDI IMPOSITION PAPERS

Volume 9

Hindi Supremacy and Arrogance

Thanjai Nalankilli

HINDI IMPOSITION PAPERS

Volume 9 Hindi Supremacy and Arrogance

edited by
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Numbers in parentheses indicate number of articles by the author in this volume.

Hindi Imposition Papers

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Even if you are reading these articles a hundred years from now, these articles will tell you the history of the development and evolution of India's Hindi imposition policies and opposition to it, starting from 1938 to 2019. This is part of Indian history. India's language problem is an ongoing problem. We do not know where all this will lead to and how this will end.

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Preface

Thanjai Nalankilli

No other people in India show the arrogance as the Hindi people in expecting that everyone in India should know Hindi and communicate with them in Hindi. Are Hindi people naturally arrogant? I doubt it. The root cause for their linguistic arrogance is the Indian constitution that makes Hindi the official language of all of India. This gives Hindi people a sense of entitlement and they expect others to learn their language and interact with them in their mother tongue Hindi.

This volume presents several articles that delve into this Hindi arrogance and sense of entitlement.

(First Published: December 2018)

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1. Hindi Arrogance Test our Patience

Thanjai Nalankilli

OUTLINE

1. Hindi Arrogance
2. Accept the Hindi Birth Certificate Or Else
3. Celebrate North Indian Festivals Or Else
4. Serve North Indian Food Or Else
5. Do Not Make Railway Reservations in Tamil Or Else
6. Do Not Transact Banking in Kannada or Else
7. Do Not Talk to Courier in Marathi or Else
8. English Masters Went Out and Hindi Masters Came In

ABBREVIATIONS

CPRS - Computerized Passenger Reservation System

MRTS - Mass Rapid Transit System

1. Hindi Arrogance

We used hear reports of some Hindi tourists and business people who come to Tamil Nadu attempting to speak with local restaurant, hotel and transportation employees in Hindi, and when these employees do not understand Hindi they grudgingly converse in English and then walk away murmuring insults about "stupid Masrasis not understanding Hindi" or "anti-national Madrasis refusing to talk in the national language". Although we were irritated about it, we tolerated this arrogant behavior. [(1) Madrasis is what some North Indians call Tamils even today because Tamil Nadu was called Madras State over four decades ago. (2) Indian constitution does not call Hindi the national language; Hindi is declared the official language, and Tamils oppose it.]

During the past decade more and more Hindi speakers came to Tamil Nadu to work in Information Technology companies (IT Companies), factories and construction projects. Even after living in Tamil Nadu for years, many of them did not learn Tamil and continue to attempt to use Hindi and if it fails use English. This is different from the behavior of other language groups, be it Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu, Bengali or Punjabi, who never attempt to conduct social and business transactions in their languages. Hindi migrants behavior and attitude is different. Local Tamil people bit their tongue and tolerated this behavior. Hindi migrants' and visitor's behavior has now reached a level that tests our patience.

2. Accept the Hindi Birth Certificate Or Else

A man from Rajasthan State (a Hindi-belt state), living in Tamil Nadu State for 13 years, went to enroll his son at a school. When he submitted his son's birth certificate in Hindi, the clerk asked him to submit an English translation certified by a notary. Although getting a notarized English translation is not difficult, the man refused to submit an English translation. Instead of getting an English translation, the man went to the school again and again and demanded that they accept the Hindi translation and each time the school refused. Then he complained to a "sympathetic" news reporter and NDTV website published a report with the title "Chennai school takes anti-Hindi stand" (NDTV website, December 12, 2008). See more details and commentary in Chapter 4 of this Volume.

3. Celebrate North Indian Festivals Or Else

A much more disturbing news was reported in several newspapers in March 2010. Students from North Indian states (mostly Hindi belt states) demanded that Holi festival be declared a holiday at Annamalai University, Tamilnadu. When Vice-Chancellor Ramanathan refused, these students engaged in violence damaging university property (The Telegraph; March 3, 2010). Holi is a north Indian holiday and is not declared a holiday in any of the four southern states. This incidence again shows Hindi arrogance. Does any northern university declare holiday for Tamil Nadu's Pongal or Kerala's Onam? Our students do not protest. They observe the local North Indian holidays and live within the cultural norms of that region. Many Hindi people, on the other hand, do not observe local culture but demand their culture be observed in Tamil Nadu institutions. What arrogance?

Here is another incidence. A North Indian (Bihar) student Gautam Kumar was seriously injured in a traffic accident when his two-wheeler collided with a lorry (truck). Since the university doctor did not have the facility to treat him, he was moved to the nearest hospital where he died. North Indian students attacked vice-chancellor's home. Then they went on a rampage attacking the hospital and patients, and damaged three ambulances, a jeep and 50 two-wheelers (Daily News and Analysis (DNA); March 3, 2010). What is the rationale? It is impossible for every university and college to have advanced medical facilities to treat serious accidents and illness. It is a fact of life. Notice that South Indian students have never went on a rampage demanding advanced hospital facilities at universities. That is impossible. Moving to a nearby hospital is the right move. Some of these students from north are bringing in a type of hooligan culture into universities.

You will notice a trend here. It is North Indian students, joining together as a group, challenge university authority and go on rampage. Local students as well as other South Indian students are not participating. They lose valuable college days because colleges are closed for days following the violence. Annamalai University is a well-respected 80-year old institution. Only in the past few years have large numbers of North Indian students come to study there.

4. Serve North Indian Food Or Else

Another incidence of North Indian students indulging in violence, this time against Tamil students as well as college officials, occurred in Hindustan Institute of Engineering Technology in Padur near Chennai, Tamilnadu in November 2008 (SIFY News; November 14, 2008), (Times of India; November 15, 2008), (Thina Thanthi (Tamil newspaper), November 15, 2008). North Indian students beat up the hostel warden complaining that food is of low quality. Tamil students said that the food is all right and came to the rescue of the warden. Three students were injured in the ensuing class between north and south Indian students. "Bad food" seems to be a code word for "South India food" for these North Indian students. Otherwise how would you explain only the North Indian students saying food is bad and Tamil students saying food is all right? Once this north-south divide was raised, some North Indians said that they object to using beef instead of chicken. Again Tamil students said that the meat was chicken and it was not beef. Are Tamil students fools not to be able to differentiate between beef and chicken? I also want to point out that, like most North Indians, most Tamils do not eat beef. So if the problem was beef, South Indian students would have objected too. In essence North Indian students attacked the warden for serving South Indian food in the south. What arrogance!

5. Do Not Make Railway Reservations in Tamil Or Else

This arrogant and violent attitude goes beyond students. Even people working in Indian government offices show their arrogance and contempt for Tamil. In September 2009, a local Tamil woman Lakshmi went to Computerized Passenger Reservation System (CPRS) Center at the Tirumailai MRTS station and filled out the reservation form in Tamil. The employee at the Senior Citizens Counter did not know Tamil and asked her to explain each item in English. This woman, who had high school education and knew English, did so. According to one news report the non-Tamil employee lost his patience and flung the reservation form at her (Times of India; September 7, 2009). Another report said that as she was explaining the form in English, the man noticed that she had the wrong train number in the form and threw the form at her (Indian Express; September 7, 2009). Both these newspaper reports agree that the non-Tamil railway employee asked her to explain her reservation form in English and also that he flung the form at her but only differ on the reason. When she said that she has the right to fill the form in Tamil, two other non-Tamil employees joined the first man and hurled insults at her in English. Seeing what was happening a Tamil-speaking employee volunteered to make the reservation. According to the news, only two employees at that office knew Tamil. While knowledge of Hindi is a requirement at Southern Railways, knowledge of the "people's language" (state language) is not a requirement.

6. Do Not Transact Banking in Kannada or Else

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister G Parameshwara said in 2018 that a man was attacked by a bank staff in Kolar (Karnataka) for asking to carry out a transaction in Kannada (TheNewsMinute.com; August 15, 2018). So, this bank staff seems to think that non-Hindi Indians should not transact business in their mother tongue in their own state. A sad state for non-Hindi peoples of India.

7. Do Not Talk to Courier in Marathi or Else

A 28-year-old courier went to deliver a package to a woman living in a high-rise building in Mumbai, Maharashtra State. He talked to her and her sister in Hindi and they asked him to speak in Marathi, the state language of Maharashtra. He argued with them that they should talk in Hindi, and the argument ended with the courier attacking one of the sisters with the pen in his hand. The assault left the woman with a deep gash. Local police registered a case against him and the courier company fired him from the job. (Hindustan Times; February 23, 2019)

8. English Masters Went Out and Hindi Masters Came In

Railways and other Indian government offices have no requirement of knowing the local language but every employee must be proficient in Hindi. Seeing that they can work in Indian government offices anywhere in India in their mother tongue, Hindi migrants and travelers get arrogant, abuse local people who do not know Hindi and expect that state government offices, schools and businesses also use Hindi, observe their holidays and serve their type of food.

Why are people who do not know Tamil appointed to central government jobs requiring regular contact with local people? Should the local people learn the language from a thousand miles away in order to deal with government officials in their own area? Or, should those who come to make a living here from a thousand miles away learn the local language? Indian government's answer is "Tamil people should learn the language a thousand miles away".

Is this fair? Is this just? Is all that happened at midnight of August 15, 1947 is, "English masters went out and Hindi masters came in"? [NOTE: British rule over the Indian subcontinent ended on August 15, 1947.]

(First Published: April 2010; Updated: Updated April 2019)

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2. **Do Unto Hindi Speakers What They Do Unto You**

T. Ganesan

OUTLINE

1. Indian Institute of Technology in Chennai (Madras) and New Delhi
2. Indian Government Operated Television
3. Indian Parliament
4. Indian Government Cabinet Meetings
5. Don't Misunderstand Me
6. Message to Hindi Speakers

1. Indian Institute of Technology in Chennai (Madras) and New Delhi

Many years ago, in the 1970s, I was talking with two friends--one was a graduate student at Madras Indian Institute of Technology (IIT, Madras) and the second was a graduate student at Delhi Indian Institute of Technology (IIT, Delhi). (Chennai was widely known as Madras at that time.) The Delhi friend was complaining that they screen Hindi movies at the hostel every Saturday night even though many students there could not understand Hindi. My Madras IIT friend said with some pride and bravado that Tamil students at IIT, Madras would never let that happen. He added, "We screen only English movies". (More than three decades have passed; I do not know what the situation is today.)

On hearing this, I thought that there was something wrong with the whole equation. We, here in Tamil Nadu (Madras IIT), were fair and screen only English movies so that all students could enjoy them, whereas IITs in Hindi region screen local language (Hindi) films knowing very well that there were many students who could not understand Hindi. We need to give back what Hindi speakers are giving to us. We need to do to Hindi speakers what they are doing to us. Let us screen Tamil movies, Telugu movies, Kannada movies and Malayalam movies at Madras IIT and see how Hindi speakers would react to it. Let us see how they feel when they could not enjoy those movies. I bet that they would scream and shout that it was unfair, and I agree it is unfair.

This type of arrogance that "if you come to our region to study at central government institutes you should watch Hindi movies but if we come to your regions to study at central government institutes we will not put up with your language movies" prevails at many levels.

2. Indian Government Operated Television

You need not have to go much further than watch television. The so-called national channels (seen all over India) show almost always Hindi movies, with may be a few English movies thrown in. After some pressure from non-Hindi movie industry, some

years ago in the 1990s, authorities at the Indian Government operated television broadcasts (Doordarshan) agreed to screen an occasional non-Hindi movie, but only non-Hindi movies that have won some award would be screened (best picture award, best director award, etc.). See the arrogance. Any two bit Hindi movie will be broadcast but for a non-Hindi movie to be broadcast it should be an award winner. This is a slap on the face of non-Hindi movie industry; it is an insult to non-Hindi film artists and producers.

Since non-Hindi entertainment shows, current event shows and news had no place in the "national broadcasts" of Doordharsan, a few regional channels were started. For example, there are a few Indian government operated broadcast channels in Chennai (as opposed to privately owned cable channels) that can be seen in and around Chennai (Tamil Nadu). Obviously we expected that these channels would broadcast only local language programs. That was not to be. Hindi movies and news are shown in these regional channels also. They have so many "national channels" showing Hindi movies and news, why encroach into the few regional channels also? In fact, little by little, more and more Hindi programs were added in these regional broadcasts seen only in Tamilnadu. As of now, Doordarsan regional broadcast in Chennai screens more Hindi movies than Tamil movies during Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights; Hindi news is broadcast at a more choice time slot than Tamil news. See the arrogance. Same arrogance shown by IIT, Delhi students in the 1970s. Such arrogance prevails even at very high levels of Indian government.

3. Indian Parliament

A few years ago Indian Railways minister presented the annual railways budget in Hindi, although he knows English well. Non-Hindi ministers could have retaliated. Current Indian finance minister is a Tamil named P. Chidambaram. He should present the annual budget in Tamil. Why not? If a Hindi minister could present the railways budget in Hindi, why can't a Tamil minister present the budget in Tamil? In the same way the Hindi budget was translated to English, the Tamil budget could also be translated to English. What is good for the goose is good for the gander too. [Update: Bad news! In 2010, Speaker of the Indian parliament ruled that ministers can speak only in Hindi or English in parliament (The Hindu newspaper: July 18, 2010)].

4. Indian Government Cabinet Meetings

At Indian government cabinet meetings also some Hindi ministers choose to speak in Hindi although they know English well. (We would have no cause for complaint if a minister who does not know English speaks in Hindi.) Non-Hindi ministers should retaliate by speaking in their mother tongues. Let the government hire couple of dozen translators to translate them to English. If India is my country and I am equal to Hindi speakers, ministers from my state should have the same rights as Hindi ministers.

5. Don't Misunderstand Me

Don't mistake me that I am for using Tamil everywhere I go, be it New Delhi or Mumbai (Bombay) or Kolkata (Calcutta). That is not my point. In fact, I lived in New Delhi for couple of years. I learned Hindi and conversed in Hindi in the buses, shops, railway station, etc. That is the right thing to do. But if Hindi people are arrogant and insist on using Hindi in places common to all Indians (for example, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) or All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMSc) or All India Institute of Management Studies (AIIMS) located in Hindi states), we should hit back by using our own languages when these institutes are located in non-Hindi states. Let Hindi speakers understand how we feel.

Central government institutions like the Indian Institute of Technology are funded by all Indians and common to all Indians. Students, teachers, research scholars and employees from all states come to these institutions irrespective of in which state they are located. Screening Hindi movies week after week in an institute just because it is located in a Hindi state is an act of arrogance. So let us screen northeastern language movies at Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, southern language movies at Indian Institute of Technology, Chennai and Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore. Let us see how Hindi students at these institutes would react.

Indian parliament is common to all Indians, irrespective of what language they speak and where they come from. If Hindi ministers insist on speaking in Hindi, then Tamil ministers should make it a point to speak in Tamil, Bengali ministers in Bengali, Telugu ministers in Telugu, ...

Ministers from all regions of India attend central government cabinet meetings. I am sure each minister loves his/her mother tongue as much as Hindi ministers love Hindi. Either keep cabinet discourses in English or allow everyone to speak in his/her mother tongue. Why should there be a special privilege for ministers from Hindi states? Let the government hire translators for each language. I would have no complaint if a minister does not know English enough and has to speak in the mother tongue. Most likely there is another minister who knows the language and could translate it to English. Else, I am sure there is an employee who could translate to English. The problem is that some Hindi ministers insist on speaking in Hindi even though they know English well. That is arrogance. That should be met with arrogance of the same kind. That is my point.

Some readers may think that I am taking a rather aggressive and belligerent attitude toward the use of Hindi at Indian government offices and institutions. Yes, I am. Hindi arrogance should be countered with aggressive retaliation. That is the only way Hindi arrogance could be countered. I am not going around throwing my language at others but if someone throws his/her language at me, I want to give it back. If we are docile and submissive, some Hindi speakers will walk all over us.

6. Message to Hindi Speakers

If Hindi speakers love their language so much and want to use it all the time, I say, "I applaud you but keep it in your states and in your institutions". Do not throw Hindi at

others in their states and in central government offices and institutions common to all Indians. Screen Hindi movies week after week in state colleges and state universities in Hindi regions. Do not screen them at central government institutes unless other language movies are also screened proportionately.

If you love Hindi, great. Use it in legislative assemblies in Hindi states. Do not use it in the Indian parliament unless other languages can also be used in the same way. Currently any member of parliament (MP) can speak in Hindi at any time in parliament but an MP wishing to speak in another Indian language has to give advance notice and obtain prior permission. It is not fair.

By all means, speak in Hindi at state government cabinet meetings of Hindi states. Do not insist on speaking in Hindi at central government cabinet meetings unless others also have the same right to speak in their mother tongue.

(First Published: February 2008; Updated: August 2010)

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3. **Personal Encounters with Hindi Arrogance in America**

P. Menon
Jeya Parasuram
Malathi

[This article is included in "Volume 8: Hindi Propagation in Foreign Countries" also because of its relevance there too.]

OUTLINE

1. Hindi at the Faculty Lounge (by P. Menon)
2. Hindi at an American Electronic Store (by Jeya Parasuram)
3. India TV in USA: Hindi News or Indian News (by Malathi)

[Starting a conversation with a non-Hindi Indian in Hindi is arrogance, thinking every Indian knows Hindi or should know Hindi. Here are three mini-articles that describe personal encounters with Hindi arrogance abroad.]

1. **Hindi at the Faculty Lounge** P. Menon

I am an assistant professor in an American university. At the time of this incidence, I had just joined the faculty a few weeks before. I was having a cup of coffee with a few faculty members in the faculty lounge. There in walked a professor of Indian origin - much older than me - may be in his fifties. He walked to our table and asked me in Hindi, something like, "I have not seen you here before. Which department are you with?" I do know some Hindi. I replied in Malayalam, "I joined the ---- department last month. How are you?" He was seemingly startled that I answered in a language he did not understand. He said, "Huh!" I repeated what I said again in Malayalam. He responded, "What language is that? I don't understand you."

I replied in English, "I thought you understand my mother tongue Malayalam, in the same way you assumed I understand your mother tongue Hindi." He turned away, murmuring in English, "Hindi is our official language." I said, "Along with English. Our neighbor state doesn't even teach Hindi in their schools."

After he left the faculty members I was chatting with asked me what it was all about. I explained to them briefly the language situation in India. Just a minute or two. I did not want to bore them.

My replying to an arrogant Hindi speaker's Hindi question in Malayalam is not original. I was merely following our illustrious chief minister Nayanar. Ramachandra Guha recalls an incidence in the January 18, 2004 issue of The Hindu newspaper. **Kerala Chief**

Minister Nayanar received a Hindi letter from Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav, a serious proponent of using Hindi at the Indian central government. Chief Minister Nayanar responded in kind by sending his reply in Kerala's official language Malayalam.

2.

Hindi at an American Electronic Store

Jeya Parasuram

Several months ago I went to a major electronic chain store. I was looking for an external hard drive. I asked a sales person what models of external hard drive they have and what is the largest available storage. He seemed like a South Asian. He answered me in Hindi. Although I had studied and passed Hindi examination in high school, I had forgotten Hindi long time ago. I was annoyed at his Hindi response and said, "What are you blabbering? Can you speak English?"

Another employee was standing behind a desk; later I found that he was an assistant manager. He walked to us and told the salesperson, "Talk to customers in English unless they talk to you first in your language". He then turned to me, apologized and took me to the aisle where they had hard drives.

3.

India TV in USA: Hindi News or Indian News

Malathi

This happened in the late 1980s. Unlike today, there were no Indian satellite channels available in USA at that time. There was an over-the-air UHF channel that broadcast a one-hour Indian program on Saturday afternoons. The program consisted of Hindi movie video-clips and about 15 minutes of news. I just watch the news. There were 4 newsreaders; they rotated from week to week. From their names, I think that two are from non-Hindi (southern) states and two from Hindi states. The first two always read the news in English. In contrast, the other two from Hindi states would start reading the news in English and in the middle switch to Hindi and then back to English and then to Hindi... So people like me who do not know Hindi were left with holes in the news.

I wrote to the TV station about this. Nothing happened. After waiting for a couple of months, I wrote to the Indian grocery store and an electronic store (selling TV, videocassette recorders (VCR)) that advertised regularly in the news segment. I complained that I and many others from non-Hindi regions do not understand parts of the news, and would stop watching it and the stores would be losing audience. They are likely to attract more audience if the news is read totally in English. I received a letter a few weeks later from the electronic store that they discussed the matter with the station and that the news would be in English in the future.

This incidence shows three things: (1) The arrogance of the two new readers from Hindi states expecting that all Indians should know Hindi. (2) If we take the initiative and act,

things could change when private business is involved. (3) "If at first you don't succeed, try again."

(First Published: May 2011)

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4. Hindi Arrogance at a Tamil Nadu School

Lalitha Krishnan Nair

OUTLINE

1. A News Report
2. Our Comments

1. A News Report

A man from Rajasthan State, living in Tamil Nadu State for 13 years, went to enroll his son at a school in Chennai (Madras), Tamil Nadu. He submitted his son's birth certificate in Hindi. The clerk told the man to submit an English translation certified by a notary. The man refused to do so and went to the school again and again (at least three times) demanding that the Hindi certificate be accepted, and each time the school staff asked him to bring a certified English translation.

It seems that this man contacted a "sympathetic" news reporter or the news reporter somehow got wind of this incidence, the NDTV website published a report with the provocative title "Chennai school takes anti-Hindi stand". The report ends with the following paragraph: "Tamil Nadu saw widespread anti-Hindi protests in the sixties against the then government's decision to adopt Hindi as the official language. Four decades on, aftershocks of those agitations are still felt. At the receiving end are children like ----- (name of the child)." [NDTV Web Site on December 12, 2008]

2. Our Comments

Our question to this father and the reporter is, "Will a school in Rajasthan or any Hindi state accept a birth certificate in Tamil?" It will not. Then why do these people expect a school in Tamilnadu to accept a Hindi certificate?

No Bengali would submit a birth certificate in Bengali to a school in Tamil Nadu or anywhere outside of Bengal. It is true with every language group except for some Hindi people. This is the arrogance and a sense entitlement displayed by many Hindi people that everyone in India should know Hindi because the Constitution of India specifies Hindi as the official language of India. Tamil Nadu does not accept Hindi as the official language. Hindi is not taught in our schools and should not be taught until Hindi states start teaching Tamil in their schools. Tamil Nadu State legislative assembly had voted against Hindi as the official language.

This father could have gotten a certified English translation in Chennai (there are some notaries who know English and Hindi in Indian government offices and banks) or could have sent it to Rajasthan and gotten a notary public to certify an English translation.

Instead this arrogant father was going to the school again and again demanding that they accept the Hindi birth certificate. The NDTV reporter writes, "At the receiving end are children like ----." If this child had difficulty getting admitted to the Tamil Nadu school, his father is the responsible party, not the Tamil Nadu government or the school staff. As we said before, would a child get enrolled in a school in a Hindi state if the parent submits the birth certificate in Tamil?

This type of arrogance we see from quite a few Hindi people. There was a news report many years ago of **a Hindi politician in an Indian Airlines flight**. He asked the hostess for something in Hindi and she did not understand it. The neighboring passenger translated it to the hostess and the arrogant Hindi politician said, "If she does not understand Hindi, I do not want it". We see the same mentality in this father also. (NOTE: Nowadays every hostess in Air India is required to know Hindi. However a hostesses flying from or to Tamil Nadu airports need not know Tamil. In fact I have been in flights within Tamil Nadu (Chennai to Trichi) where no staff knew Tamil.)

It is this type of arrogance and sense of entitlement of Hindi speakers living in other states that created a brief spurt of violence against Hindi speakers in Mumbai (Bombay) in February 2008. Some influential Hindi residents in the city **tried to make Hindi an official language of Mumbai City**. This was one reason for Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) leader Raj Thakeray making a few fiery speeches and his supporters attacking a few taxi drivers and street vendors from Hindi belt states. While we disapprove of this violence, we do understand Maharashtrians' anger against Hindi speakers' arrogance and sense of entitlement everywhere they go in India.

"If Hindi were to become the official language of India, Hindi-speaking people will govern us. We will be treated like third rate citizens." - C. N. Annadurai, former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister (speaking at a Public Meeting on April 29, 1963 at Chennai Marina (Madras Marina))

(First Published: February 2009)

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5.

Hindi Arrogance in Indian Internet Chat Rooms and Discussion Forums

P. Krishnan

I have seen a kind of Hindi arrogance in Internet chat rooms and discussion forums. Hindis in the chatrooms attempting to chat with non-Hindi Indians in Hindi without first enquiring if they know Hindi. In some chat rooms frequented by Indians, I have received messages in Hindi from some Hindi speakers. No other language person, be it Telugu or Punjabi or Bengali or Marathi, has ever sent me a message in their mother tongue. Occasionally a Malayali may send me an English message asking me if I know Malayalam (because some Malayalis do have the name "Krishnan"). When I say "no", they chat with me in English. That is not the case with Hindi people. They do not ask if I know Hindi. They automatically assume that I know Hindi or I must know Hindi because I have an Indian name.

When someone starts a chat with me in Hindi, I am never polite with those people. I respond rudely why they think that I know their mother tongue (not necessarily in those words). I am usually a gentleman but I am irritated by these Hindi people's arrogance that every Indian should know their language. May be these people would think twice before starting a chat in Hindi next time.

(First Published: November 2011)

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6. **Hindi Migrants Must Learn the State Language**

Thanjai Nalankilli

Those who come into our states to earn a living must learn our language.

OUTLINE

1. Introduction
2. Mumbai Taxi Drivers
3. State Language Requirement in Schools
4. Hindi Birth Certificate Issue
5. Tamil at a Voting Booth
6. Long-time Hindi Migrants in Assam

1. Introduction

Large numbers of migrants from Hindi states are moving into South India, Maharashtra and some other non-Hindi regions seeking employment. One thing that differentiates them from other migrants from one non-Hindi state to another is the sense of entitlement that most Hindi migrants have. They expect that people of the state they move into should know their mother tongue, Hindi. The reasoning, as expressed by some of them, is that Hindi is India's official language (along with English) and every Indian should know it; so they do not want to learn the language of the state they move into. In my opinion, those who come into our non-Hindi states to earn a living should learn our language. Shirish Parkar of Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) was absolutely correct when he said, "People from other states come to Maharashtra because of their need, not ours. It should be made imperative for them to learn Marathi."

Migrants learning the local language is important whether the migration takes place from one state to another within India or on an international scale from one country to another. Japan used to hire nurses from other countries. One condition was that their visa would be revoked if they do not acquire proficiency in Japanese within a specified time limit.

Prime Minister of United Kingdom (UK) said, "At the moment, someone can move here with very basic English and there's no requirement to improve it over time. We will change that." (Indian Express; January 18, 2016). Read carefully; migrants are coming with a basic knowledge and they should improve it. Here Hindi many migrants come to non-Hindi states with no knowledge of the state language, live here for years and make no attempt to learn the state language. That should change.

Indian constitution should be amended if necessary and laws enacted to require all who work in central government, state government and private jobs should learn the state language and teach their children the state language as conditions for employment. Level

of proficiency depends on the education level of the individual and the individual's job interaction with local people. Necessary tests should be conducted by the state government.

2. Mumbai Taxi Drivers

Chief Minister of Maharashtra State, Mr. Ashok Chavan, told reporters on January 20, 2010 that taxi driver permits would be issued only to those who can read and write the state language Marathi. General Secretary of Mumbai Taxi Drivers Association opposed it and said, "These are laborers. They cannot go to school and learn Marathi." Is it then up to the local clients hiring taxis to learn Hindi? No it is up to the taxi drivers to learn Marathi. Can a Marathi go to the Hindi city Lucknow and expect to drive taxicabs there without knowing Hindi? No, absolutely not.

Those who come to our states to earn a living must learn our state language. Look for employment in Hindi states if you do not want to learn our language.

3. State Language Requirement in Schools

Tamil Nadu State government implemented the Tamil Language Learning Act in 2006. It requires that all students in Tamil Nadu must learn Tamil as a language. Principal of a school complained that many of the students in that school were from Hindi states and it was difficult for the Hindi-mother-tongue students to learn Tamil (The Hindu; May 27, 2016). If these students can learn English, why not Tamil? Learning mathematics is difficult for some students, shall we remove mathematics as a subject in schools? There are core subjects students must learn in schools. State language is one of them. Do they expect their fellow students, neighbours, store owners and bus drivers to learn Hindi to talk to them? If they came to live in our state they must learn our language.

Parents of these Hindi-speaking students came to Tamil Nadu to earn a living. Their children should learn Tamil. If it is too difficult, parents should go back to where they came from and try to find a job there.

4. Hindi Birth Certificate Issue

A man from Rajasthan State (a Hindi-belt state), living in Tamil Nadu State for 13 years, went to enroll his son at a school. When he submitted his son's birth certificate in Hindi to the school, the clerk asked him to submit an English translation certified by a notary. Although getting a notarized English translation is not difficult, the man refused to submit an English translation. Instead he went to a news reporter and complained (NDTV website, December 12, 2008). This man expects school employees in non-Hindi states to learn Hindi to appease people like him. Remember, he was living in Tamil Nadu for 13 years.

5. Tamil at a Voting Booth

Times of India (October 18, 2011) carried a news item that signs at voting booths for the local body election in Tamil Nadu were only in Tamil and those who do not know Tamil found it difficult to vote. Local body elections means elections for municipal council and village council (panchayat).

Times of India cited 3 instances. A 63 years old man (did not mention how long he lived in Tamil Nadu), a 23 years old law college student (did not mention how long he lived in Tamil Nadu; could be just came for studies) and a 23 years old student who was living in Tamil Nadu for 10 years.

Why didn't the young man living in Tamil Nadu for 10 years learn Tamil? He must have gone to school here. He refuses to learn Tamil but wants to vote in local body election! We do not know how long the others were living in Tamil Nadu. If they were living here for more than a year, they must learn Tamil. If you were here for only a few months, wait until you learn Tamil before voting in local body elections. You are not in a hurry to learn the local language, why are you in a hurry to vote in local elections? Learn Tamil and then vote. This is Tamil Nadu.

Only those living in the state for at least 10 years and know the state language should be allowed to vote in local body, state and parliamentary elections. I do not see a reason to allow short-term migrants to vote in local body and state elections. They should vote in parliamentary elections in their home state by mail until they complete 10 years in the state and learn state language.

6. Long-time Hindi Migrants in Assam

Assam State government was updating the National Register of Citizens (NRC) of Assam, primarily to identify illegal migrants from other countries. Hindi migrants in Assam want officers knowing Hindi be appointed to evaluate their claims of residency (The Telegraph; August 15, 2018). No other language group requested officers knowing their mother tongue be appointed. Why this special privilege for Hindi migrants?

A representative of Hindi speakers in Assam said that migration of Hindi-speaking people to Assam began during British rule (The Telegraph; August 15, 2018). Many Hindi speakers living in Assam today are their decedents. **These people are living in Assam for generations but have not learnt the state language Assamese.**

As we stated in the beginning of this article, large numbers of migrants from Hindi states are moving into South India, Maharashtra and some other non-Hindi regions in recent years. We do not want what happened in Assam happening in these states. Non-Hindi states MUST enact laws (and demand amendment of the constitution if necessary) that all migrants must learn state language within 6 months and also teach state language to their children. Those who do not comply should not be allow to work in the state in central government, state government and private jobs. Necessary tests must be conducted by the state government.

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